

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. With a view to promoting competition, diversity and local ownership in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already massive companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion from a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

In particular, I want to emphasize that local broadcast outlets are licensed entities required to serve the interests of the publics reached by their signals. As long as public radio spectrum is so licensed by the federal government, we the people should retain the right to oversee who is permitted to own and operate broadcast stations in our communities, to ensure that they are directly accountable to us in our local communities. Such accountability is best maintained by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I strongly urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest (i.e. the listening, reading, and viewing public).

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Erich N. Brough